

**Testimony Before the Senate Health Policy Committee in Support of HB 4598,
Legislation Establishing Licensure for Midwives with the
Certified Professional Midwife (CPM) Credential**

Presented by Heather Robinson, CPM Student, Detroit, MI

November 29, 2016

Good morning, I'd like to introduce myself as a current midwifery student graduating this fall from the Birthwise Midwifery School located in the state of Maine. My name is Heather Robinson. I am 47, single mother of 4, a recent grandmother, native and resident of Detroit, fluent in Spanish. My desire to become a midwife began after the home birth of my now 17 year old daughter. My pathway to midwifery has included detours. I became a licensed paramedic working for the Detroit Fire Department, EMS division; I obtained my certificate as a childbirth educator; and became a birth doula. I am currently employed as a paramedic in the Emergency Room at St. Joseph Mercy Oakland Hospital in Pontiac. Though an interesting journey it has been, I am finally on my path. I will soon be completing the community-based program at Birthwise Midwifery School, an accredited institution by the Midwifery Education and Accreditation Council (MEAC), which is preparing me for national certification as a Certified Professional Midwife (CPM). This program is very comprehensive and has allowed me to do my clinical hours with senior midwives as my preceptors in and around my Detroit home. I have witnessed incredible empowerment and overall healthy living improvements from the women I have provided midwifery care to in Detroit. The midwifery model of care spends one-on-one quality time with women and their families with heavy emphasis on good nutrition as the backbone to prenatal care. We have a very low rate of preterm birth. Midwifery care and homebirth with a trained professional should be an option to all women not just those that can pay the out of pocket expense. There are mothers that I meet who give up the hope of having a homebirth when they learn that we cannot be reimbursed via Medicaid. There is a needy population that is underserved with optimal care during their pregnancy. I wish to serve my community upon completion of my degree but I am torn by the necessity I have to earn a living.

I know from discussions I have with several of my classmates, where 6 different states are represented, the number of advantages midwives have practicing in states with licensure over non-licensed states. There is more seamless care for mothers and their babies among healthcare providers. There are cities much like my own that have the diverse population make-up, such as Memphis and Milwaukee, where I am considering relocating in order to practice as a CPM, receive compensation for my services, and provide for my family. I am hoping this will not be the case as my heart is in Detroit. There is logical benefit to the recognition of my skill set much like recognizing my national license to practice as a paramedic. Please consider the talent the state of Michigan could be losing in the shadow of not passing licensure to midwives here.

Thank you,

Heather Robinson